



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO MEET WITH SOUTHERN NUCLEAR OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS SAFETY PERFORMANCE AT HATCH NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with Southern Nuclear Operating Company officials on Tuesday, April 6, to discuss the results of NRC's annual assessment of safety performance at the Hatch nuclear power plant near Baxley, Georgia.

The meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the Southeastern Technical College, 3001 E. First Street, in Vidalia. The public is invited to observe the meeting, and NRC officials will be available before the conclusion of the meeting to answer any questions.

The performance period to be discussed is January 1 to December 31, 2003. In addition, NRC staff will provide a brief overview of how the agency's Reactor Oversight Process works.

A letter from the NRC to Southern Nuclear addresses plant safety performance during the previous year and forms the basis for the meeting discussions. The letter states that Hatch operated safely and that plant performance was at a level requiring no additional NRC inspection beyond normal. The letter, which is available from Region II Public Affairs and on the NRC web site at www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/hat_2003q4.pdf, says the NRC staff will also continue to conduct inspections of the plant's implementation of NRC security Orders, along with any newly developed portions of the security inspection program.

In addition to the routine inspections, the agency will also conduct inspections of the plant's spent fuel material control and accounting and independent spent fuel storage (dry cask storage) operations.

On October 16 of last year, the company submitted a request to combine the emergency operations facilities for Hatch, Farley and Vogtle into one facility located at company headquarters in Birmingham, Alabama. The NRC has arranged for a demonstration of the centralized facility's capabilities next July 14 which will include supporting exercises at Farley and Hatch. NRC officials said this will not be evaluated as part of the reactor oversight program but will be used to determine approval of the request.

Current performance indicators for the two units at the Hatch plant are available at www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/HAT1/hat1_chart.html and www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/HAT2/hat2_chart.html

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